

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 13508

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, VT, PL

SUBJECT: VATICAN RELATIONS WITH POLAND

REF: WARSAW 5842

SUMMARY: SZABLEWSKI ARRIVES IN ROME TO OPEN POLISH MISSION TO HOLY SEE. VATICAN SEES IMPROVEMENT IN POLISH-STATE-CHURCH RELATIONS AS TACTICAL GOP MOVE AND NOT SANGUINE IT WILL LONG ENDURE. CONSIDERABLE DIFFICULTY IN GAINING GOP APPROVAL FOR NEW ARCHBISHOP OF WROCLAW.

1. POLAND'S OFFICIAL-INFORMAL REPRESENTATIVE TO HOLY SEE, KAZIMIERZ SZABLEWSKI, ARRIVED ROME OCTOBER 1 TO OPEN HIS OFFICE WHICH ACCORDING TO RESPONSIBLE VATICAN OFFICIAL WILL BE INDEPENDENT FROM POLISH EMBASSY ROME, ALTHOUGH HE WILL RECEIVE ADMINISTRATIVE SUPORT THEREFROM. IN DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN HOLY SEE AND ITALIAN GOVERNMENT, IT WAS DECIDED THAT POLISH MISSION SHOULD FOLLOW PRECEDENT ESTABLISHED BY AMBASSADOR LODGE'S OFFICE, AND NOT BE ACCREDITED TO EITHER ITALY OR HOLY SEE. BY AGREEMENT, NEW POLISH MISSION MAY HAVE UP TO THREE OFFICER-LEVEL STAFF MEMBERS. VATICAN SOURCE SAYS IT HAS NOT YET BEEN DECIDED WHICH MATTERS WILL BE HANDLED BY SZABLEWSKI'S OFFICE AND WHICH BY VATICAN

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REPRESENTATIVE WHO FROM TIME TO TIME WILL VISIT WARSAW.

2. UNDER JULY AGREEMENT BETWEEN VATICAN AND GOP, VATICAN HAS OPTION TO OPEN A PERMANENT OFFICE IN WARSAW SHOULD IT WISH. HOWEVER, BOWING TO WISHES OF POLISH HIERARCHY, VATICAN HAS DECIDED FOR TIME BEING NOT TO ACT ON THIS MATTER. SOURCE EXPECTED, HOWEVER, THAT WITHIN NEXT FEW MONTHS VATICAN REPRESENTATIVE WOULD VISIT WARSAW, PROBABLY ARCHBISHOP POGGI WHO NOW HANDLING RELATIONS WITH EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES. THIS REPRESENTATIVE WOULD STAY IN POLAND AS LONG AS NECESSARY.

3. SOURCE NOTED THAT VATICAN IS AWARE OF IMPROVED ATMOSPHERICS IN POLISH CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS, BUT CONVICTION HERE IS THAT THIS IS PURELY A TACTICAL CHANGE AND DOES NOT SIGNAL ANY DRAMATIC IMPROVEMENT IN GOVERNMENT'S ATTITUDE TOWARD RELIGION. VATICAN ANALYSTS SEEM TO BELIEVE THAT KAKOL'S HONEMOON RELATIONSHIP WITH CHURCH AUTHORITIES AS WELL AS PROPAGANDA OFFENSIVE PRIOR TO GIEREK'S TRIP TO U.S. PROBABLY TWO FACTORS MOST RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS SLIGHT THAW AND THEY WOULD NOT BE AT ALL SURPRISED IF SITUATION WERE TO WORSEN BY YEAR'S END. SOURCE ADMITTED THAT NUMBER OF BUILDING PERMITS FOR CHURCHES HAVE BEEN APPROVED, BUT THIS ONLY FIRST STEP ON LONG PROCESS INVOLVING APPROVAL OF PLAN AND OBTAINING OF BUILDING MATERIALS, AND IN INTERVENING PERIOD APPROVAL COULD BE SHELVED. THERE HAS ALSO BEEN SOME INDICATION THAT STATE NOW WILLING TO LOOK MORE SYMPATHETICALLY ON CHURCH'S TAX PROBLEMS, NOTABLY GRANTING OF TAX RATE OF PRIVATE INDIVIDUAL RATHER THAN OF PRIVATE BUSINESS TO PRIESTS AND A TAX ADVANTAGE FOR SEMINARIES WHICH, OF COURSE, ECONOMICALLY NONPRODUCTIVE.

4. IN ADDITION TO PERENNIAL PROBLEM OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS FOR WHICH NO PROGRESS IN SIGHT, MOST PRESSING PROBLEM NOW IS SELECTION OF NEW ARCHBISHOP OF WROCLAW. ALTHOUGH HOLY SEE HAS NO LEGAL OBLIGATION TO OBTAIN GOVERNMENT'S APPROVAL FOR CANDIDATES, ON PRACTICAL BASIS THIS MUST BE DONE FOR OTHERWISE GOVERNMENT COULD WITHHOLD FROM NEW BISHOP PERMISSION TO EXERCISE HIS OFFICE. FOUR NAMES HAVE SO FAR BEEN PRESENTED TO GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES AND ALL HAVE BEEN REFUSED. PRACTICE IS FOR POLISH HIERARCHY TO CHECK NAMES OF SUITABLE CANDIDATES WITH GOVERNMENT WITHOUT NECESSARILY ADVISING CANDIDATES BEFOREHAND. ONCE GOVERNMENT APPROVAL HAS BEEN OBTAINED CANDIDATES WOULD BE CANVASSED AND FINALLY A LIST OF FOUR NAMES SENT TO ROME FROM WHICH HOLY

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SEE
WOULD MAKE ITS CHOICE. SOURCE SAID THAT THIS PROBLEM OF CHOOSING SLATE OF CANDIDATES IS PREROGATIVE OF POLISH BISHOPS AND HOLY SEE DOES NOT PLAN TO GET INVOLVED WITH POSSIBLY EXCEPTION OF REQUESTING THROUGH SZABLEWSKI THAT GOP EXERCISE A BIT MORE FLEXIBILITY IN APPROVING CANDIDATES. HOLY SEE IS ADAMANTLY AGAINST CHOOSING ANYONE FROM PEACE PRIEST ORGANIZATION WHO WOULD OBVIOUSLY BE NATURAL CHOICE FOR GOP.

5. SOURCE SAID VATICAN HAS NOTICED OF LATE AN INCREASED INTEREST AMONG EASTERN EUROPEANS TO BUILD BRIDGES WITH WEST, INCLUDING HOLY SEE. VATICAN HAS FEELING THAT SOCIALIST GOVERNMENTS TAKING ADVANTAGE OF EVERY POSSIBILITY IN DETENTE ATMOSPHERE, CSCE TALKS, AS WELL AS CHINESE PRESSURE ON SOVIET EASTERN FLANK TO OPEN DIALOGUES WHEREVER AND WITH WHOMEVER THEY CAN IN ORDER TO BUILD MODICUM OF INDEPENDENCE FROM SOVIET UNION. BEARUTY

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